Course description:
How high can the stakes get with music? Over centuries, music has developed a language, cultural codes, and societal value. Experimental music that questions this classical foundation manifests itself in many ways, from sound to noise to silence. We will use experimental music and thought as a starting place in considering issues including cultural appropriation, extending an existing tradition, political intervention, categorization, organization and hierarchy. Units include Extremes: extensions of the tradition; Commentary: political intervention & artistic appropriation; and Between genres: is it music? No previous musical training required for the course.

Course materials:
5. *All other readings and recordings available on class LATTE page.*

Grading requirements:
- Attendance and participation 20%
- Listening responses & written assignments 25%
- Unit 1 paper 20%
- Unit 2 paper 20%
- Unit 3 paper 20%

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Attendance and participation:
- Attendance and participation are mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed with no grade penalty. Excused absences include medical emergencies and religious commitments, or other emergencies at discretion of instructor with advance notice. Each unexcused absence will result in 2 percentage points deducted from your final grade. Two latenesses equal one absence.

Assignments:
- Written assignments and listening responses are key elements in our critical thinking, listening, and writing process. For each work studied in class, please write 450 - 500 words in response to the given theme or prompt. **Late responses will not be accepted.**
**Unit papers:**
You will receive prompts for each unit paper. Each paper must engage with the prompt meaningfully, and have a clear thesis in the introduction that is supported and explored in the rest of the paper. It will not be required to do research outside of the course materials/readings, but you may, if you find it necessary. Each unit paper must be 1,500 – 2,000 words. **Late papers will receive a grade penalty of 1/3 letter grade per any part of 24 hours late** (e.g. a paper that earned an A- in content and writing but was turned in on Tuesday, Jan. 5 at 11 pm with an original deadline of Monday, Jan 4 at 1 pm will receive a grade of B). Extensions will only be given 48 hours in advance of the deadline and only under extreme circumstances.

**Formatting for all assignments:**
All assignments should be in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and a single-spaced, left-aligned header with your full name, course number, and date. Assignments should also have a title, centered and italicized. All citations must use Chicago Manual of Style formatting (footnotes and bibliography). Consult the given sample assignment if in doubt. **Assignments that do not follow these formatting rules will not be accepted.**

**Academic integrity:**
Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be treated as such. Please refer to the Brandeis University policy on academic integrity (section 4 of Rights and Responsibilities).

**Accessibility:**
If you have a disability on record with the university and would like reasonable accommodation made for you, please contact me immediately.

**Preliminary Listening List**
*plus many additional listening examples in class*

**Unit One: Extremes: extensions of the Western classical tradition**

- Steve Reich  *Come Out* (1966)  - process and repetition
- George Crumb  *Black Angels* (1970)  - new sounds from old instruments
- Morton Feldman  *Rothko Chapel* (1971)  - time and boredom
- Georg Friedrich Haas  *In vain* (2000)  - theater in concert music
- Rebecca Saunders  *Vermilion* (2003)  - violence in the elite
- Gérard Grisey  *Quatre Chants Pour Franchir le Seuil* (1998)  - the fragility of voice

**Unit Two: Commentary: political intervention, artistic appropriation, insider connections**

- Jennifer Walshe  Multiple works  - postmodern possibilities
- Janet Cardiff  *40 Part Motet* (2001)  - appropriation and homage
- Johannes Kreidler  Multiple works  - insider reference
- Wendy Carlos  *Switched-On Bach* (1968)  - electronic representation

**Unit Three: Between genres: is it music?**

- James Turrell  *Ganzfeld* and other works  - visual art vs. music
- Alvin Lucier  *I am sitting in a room* (1968)  - environment and sound
- Peter Ablingier  *Hand in the rain* and other works  - conceptualism
- Caroline Park  Multiple works  - choice and experience
- Ragnar Kjartansson  *The Visitors* (2012)  - multi-disciplinary considerations
- La Monte Young  *Dream House* (1974)  - immersive environments
Course Schedule*
*subject to change

Week 1: Introductions

Wednesday, January 18
Introduction to the course

Thursday, January 19
Listening to and talking about music

Week 2: Unit One: Extremes

Monday, January 23
A very brief history of Western classical music
due 1/23:
Read: Copland, What to Listen for in Music, pp. 1 – 109; Gottschalk, ch. 1.

Wednesday, January 25
A very brief history of Western classical music, continued

Thursday, January 26
Critical listening: what are we listening for?
due 1/26:
Write: In a coherent, informal personal essay, please explore how you listen to music in your every day life – what music do you listen to, why do you listen to it, where and when. Consider how you categorize the music in your life. What led you to make these choices? How is this different from attending a concert (any genre). How has your relationship to music changed over your recent life? Use full sentences. 750 – 1,000 words.

Week 3: Unit One: Extremes

Monday, January 30
Form and rhetoric
due 1/30:
Read: Ross, The Rest is Noise, pp. 483 – 514 & 515 - 557; Readings on LATTE.

Wednesday, February 1
Process and result

Thursday, February 2
Sound and color
due 2/2:
Write: Listening response #1

Week 4: Unit One: Extremes

Monday, February 6
Sound as material, sound as form
due 2/6:
Listen: Gérard Grisey, Quatre Chants pour franchir le seuil
Read: Ross, pp. 558 – 588; Gottschalk, ch. 2

Wednesday, February 8
Classical genres
Thursday, February 9  
**due 2/9:**  
*The voice*  
**Write:** *Listening response #2*

**Week 5: Unit One: Extremes**

Monday, February 13  
Concert ritual, theater, behavior  
**due 2/13:**  
*Listen:* *Haas, In vain; Saunders, Vermilion*  
*Read:* *Readings on LATTE.*

Wednesday, February 15  
Concert ritual, theater, behavior, continued

Thursday, February 16  
Discussion

Friday, February 17  
***Unit One paper due on LATTE by 5pm on Friday, February 17***

**Week 6: February Break**

Monday, February 20  
**No class**

Wednesday, February 22  
**No class**

Thursday, February 23  
**No class**

**Week 7: Unit Two: Commentary**

Monday, February 27  
Close reading, close listening  
**due 2/27:**  
*Listen:* *Tallis, Spem in alium; Carlos, Switched on Bach*  
*Read:* *Kelly, Sound, pp. 23 – 25, 60 – 80; Gottschalk, ch. 3; Readings on LATTE*

Wednesday, March 1  
Postmodernism

Thursday, March 2  
In a new light

**Week 8: Unit Two: Commentary**

Monday, March 6  
Building commentaries  
**due 3/6:**  
*Listen:* *Surprise listening examples on LATTE.*  
*Read:* *Gottschalk, ch. 5; Readings on LATTE.*

Wednesday, March 8  
Aesthetic commentaries

Thursday, March 9  
Aesthetic commentaries, continued  
**due 3/9:**  
*Write:* *Response #3*
Week 9: Unit Two: Commentary

Monday, March 13
Political music
due 3/13:
Listen / watch: Kreidler (on LATTE); Walshe (on LATTE).

Wednesday, March 15
Political music, continued

Thursday, March 16
The voice, revisited

Week 10: Unit Two: Commentary

Monday, March 20
Music criticism and the making of history
due 3/20:
Read & Listen: Readings and music on LATTE.

Wednesday, March 22
Music as musical commentary: Minimalism

Thursday, March 23
Music as musical commentary: Excess

Friday, March 24
*** Unit Two papers due by 5pm on Friday, March 24 on LATTE ***

Week 11: Unit Three: Between genres

Monday, March 27
Categorization

Wednesday, March 29
In-class project

Thursday, March 30
In-class project, continued

Week 12: Unit Three: Between genres

Monday, April 3
Listening and discussion
due 4/3:
Listen: Lucier, I am sitting in a room; Ablinger, Voice and Piano; Ablinger, Augmented Study; Park, SOTO; Park, less than human

Wednesday, April 5
Music outside the concert hall

Thursday, April 6
due 4/6:
Write: Detailed proposal for final paper, ~500 words. Include at least 3 readings from this course to meaningfully reference in your paper.

Week 13: Passover Break

Monday, April 10
No class

Wednesday, April 12
No class
Thursday, April 13  
No class

**Week 14: Unit Three: Between genres**

Monday, April 17  
No class

Wednesday, April 19  
**due 4/19:**  
Brandeis Monday - Discussion  
**Read:** Readings on LATTE.

Thursday, April 20  
**due 4/20:**  
The seen and the unseen  
**Write:** Listening Response #4

**Week 15: Unit Three: Between genres**

Monday, April 24  
Presentations

Wednesday, April 26  
Presentations

Thursday, April 27  
Presentations

**Week 16: Unit Three: Between genres**

Monday, May 1  
Risk and experimentation

Wednesday, May 3  
Last day of class

**Week 17: Final papers due**

**Wednesday, May 10**  
***Final papers due on LATTE by 7pm***

*Seniors graduating in Spring 2017 must turn in their final papers by 7pm on Friday, May 5. Early submissions are always welcome.*


**Writing Prompts**

Refer to class policies for formatting, length, and citation guidelines.

**Unit paper #1:**

Vocal music generally sets a pre-existing written text to music. Consider the music we listened to in class that does not use understandable text. How does this music communicate? Does it communicate? On the other side, consider Grisey’s Quatre Chants, which sets four unconnected texts to music. How does this work benefit from the additional meaning conveyed by these song texts? What does this music mean, if anything? Choose one of these songs (including the Berceuse) as the focus of your paper. Analyze the relationship between text, music, philosophy, and perspective in your chosen movement. What makes this song work?

***Unit One paper due on LATTE by 5pm, Friday, February 17***

**Unit paper #2:**

What, if anything, do we risk by commenting on something? Does a work of music (or art, etc) risk anything, or put anything at risk, by commenting? Music that is about other music is one example of artistic commentary. Music can also comment on external events or concepts. How is this kind of commentary different from the first kind? Choose one musical work (your choice – any genre) to use as the focus of your answer. In addition, directly respond to one of our course readings and one of the musical works studied in unit #2 in your argument.

***Unit Two papers due by 5pm, Friday, March 24 on LATTE***

**Unit paper #3:**

What does genre and categorization allow us in art? Choose at least three readings from the course list to respond to meaningfully in your argument. Refer to at least two works from the course list and “close-read” them in support of your argument. You may refer to creative works of your own choice as well. Your proposals must be approved!

***Final papers due on LATTE by 7pm, Wednesday, May 10***

*Seniors graduating in Spring 2017 must turn in their final papers by 7pm, Friday, May 5. Early submissions are always welcome.*